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wherein said control device executes automatic control of the video camera with transmitting image signals if the control command for the video camera is not received from the computer terminal.

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4. (Twice Amended) A camera control system according to claim 1, further comprising:

an issuing device adapted to issue a control right of the video camera to one of a plurality of computer terminals which makes a request to acquire the control right of the video camera which is required for said control device to control the video camera,

wherein said control device executes automatic control of the video camera if the control right of the video camera is not issued to any of the plurality of computer terminals by said issuing device.

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7. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 4, wherein said issuing device issues control rights of a predetermined plurality of video cameras to one computer terminal.

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8. (Twice Amended) A camera control system according to claim 7, wherein said control device executes automatic control of the predetermined plurality of video cameras if the control rights of the predetermined plurality of video cameras are not issued to any of the computer terminals by said issuing device.

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10. (Twice Amended) A camera control system according to claim 7, wherein said control device executes automatic control of video cameras whose control rights are not received for a predetermined time period, from among the predetermined plurality of video cameras, if the control rights of the predetermined plurality of video cameras are issued to one computer terminal by said issuing device.

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14. (Twice Amended) A camera control system according to claim 11, wherein said storage device stores at least one of a zoom magnification, a subject distance and an on/off state of a backlight correction of the video camera, correspondingly with the image pickup direction of the video camera.

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16. (Amended) A camera control system according to claim 8, wherein if automatic control is being executed by said control device, said video transmitting device transmits video signals from the predetermined plurality of video cameras to a computer terminal which has made the video transmission request, while changing over the video signals at intervals of a predetermined time period.

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19. (Twice Amended) A camera control system comprising:
a control device adapted to control a video camera;
an automatic control device adapted to execute automatic control of the video camera with transmitting image signals to a computer terminal if a control command for the video camera is not received from the computer terminal;
a plurality of computer terminals for enabling said control device to output the control command for the video camera via a network; and
said video camera controlled by said control device.

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20. (Amended) A control method for a camera control system for controlling a video camera from a computer terminal via a network, said control method comprising:
a control step of controlling the video camera on the basis of a control command from the computer terminal; and

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an automatic control step of executing automatic control of the video camera with transmitting image signals if the control command for the video camera is not received from the computer terminal.

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22. (Amended) A control method according to claim 20, further comprising:
a video transmitting step of transmitting a video image of the video camera in response to a request from a plurality of computer terminals,

wherein said automatic control step stops automatic control of the video camera if the video image of the video camera is not outputted by said video transmitting step.

23. (Amended) A control method according to claim 20, further comprising:
an issuing step of issuing a control right of the video camera to one of a plurality of computer terminals which makes a request to acquire the control right of the video camera which is required for said control step to control the video camera,

wherein said automatic control step stops automatic control of the video camera if the control right of the video camera is not issued to any of the plurality of computer terminals by the issuing step.

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38. (Amended) A storage medium which stores therein a program for executing control over a camera control system for controlling a video camera from a computer terminal via a network, said program comprising processes of:

controlling the video camera on the basis of a control command from the computer terminal; and

executing automatic control of the video camera with transmitting image signals if the control command for the video camera is not received from the computer terminal.

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40. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 38, wherein said program further comprises processes of:

transmitting a video image of the video camera in response to a request from a plurality of computer terminals, and

stopping automatic control of the video camera if the video image of the video camera is outputted.

41. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 38, wherein said program further comprises processes of:

issuing a control right of the video camera to one of a plurality of computer terminals which makes a request to acquire the control right of the video camera which is required to control the video camera; and

executing automatic control of the video camera if the control right of the video camera is not issued to any of the plurality of computer terminals.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 14, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23, 38, 40 and 41 have been amended.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of changes made to the claims by this Amendment.

This marked-up version has been entitled "Version With Markings To Show Changes Made."

The Examiner has rejected applicants' claims 1-55 under 35 USC § 102(e) as anticipated by the Sasaki, et al. patent. With respect to applicants' claim, as amended, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants' independent claims 1, 20 and 38 have been amended to better define applicants' invention. More particularly, these claims now recite in one form or another an apparatus, method and storage medium adapted to control a video camera from a computer

terminal via a network in which the video camera is controlled on the basis of a control command from the computer terminal, and automatic control of the video camera is executed with transmitting signals if the control command for the video camera is not received from the computer terminal. Such a construction is not taught or suggested by the cited Sasaki, et al. patent.

More particularly, the Examiner has argued with respect to the Sasaki, et al. patent as follows:

"Figure 32 is a flowchart showing the operation of the camera management unit in response to a disconnect request. When a disconnect request is issued (no longer has control command), the video camera position is automatically executed to the home position. This can be considered as the control command for the video camera that is not received from any of the plurality of computer terminals while the control device executes automatic control of the video cameras (See, Col 19, lines 12-19)."

The Examiner's above statement is correct regarding the teaching of the Sasaki, et al. patent at column 19, lines 12-19, in that the patent states that when a disconnect request is issued that the camera is positioned at the home position. However, these lines of the patent also indicate that this camera movement is a part of the disconnect processing which also includes "processing for shutting down the communication channel." If the communication channel is shut down, there is no transmission of image signals. This is supported by the description in the Sasaki, et al. patent at column 16, lines 32-37 which state "If 'DISCONNECT' . . . is selected . . . the privilege to control this camera is given to another camera controller and the video from the camera vanishes from the monitor 1050."

Thus, in the Sasaki, et al. while the camera may be brought to a home position in response to a disconnect, there is no transmission of image signals due to shutting down of the transmission channel. The patent thus fails to teach or suggest executing automatic control of a video camera with transmitting image signals if a control command for the video camera is not received from a computer terminal.


Applicants' amended independent claims 1, 20 and 38, and their respective dependent claims, all of which recite such features thus patentably distinguish over the Sasaki, et al. patent.

In view of the above, it is submitted that applicants' claims, as amended, patentably distinguish over the cited art of record. Accordingly, reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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